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CANADA FIRST;

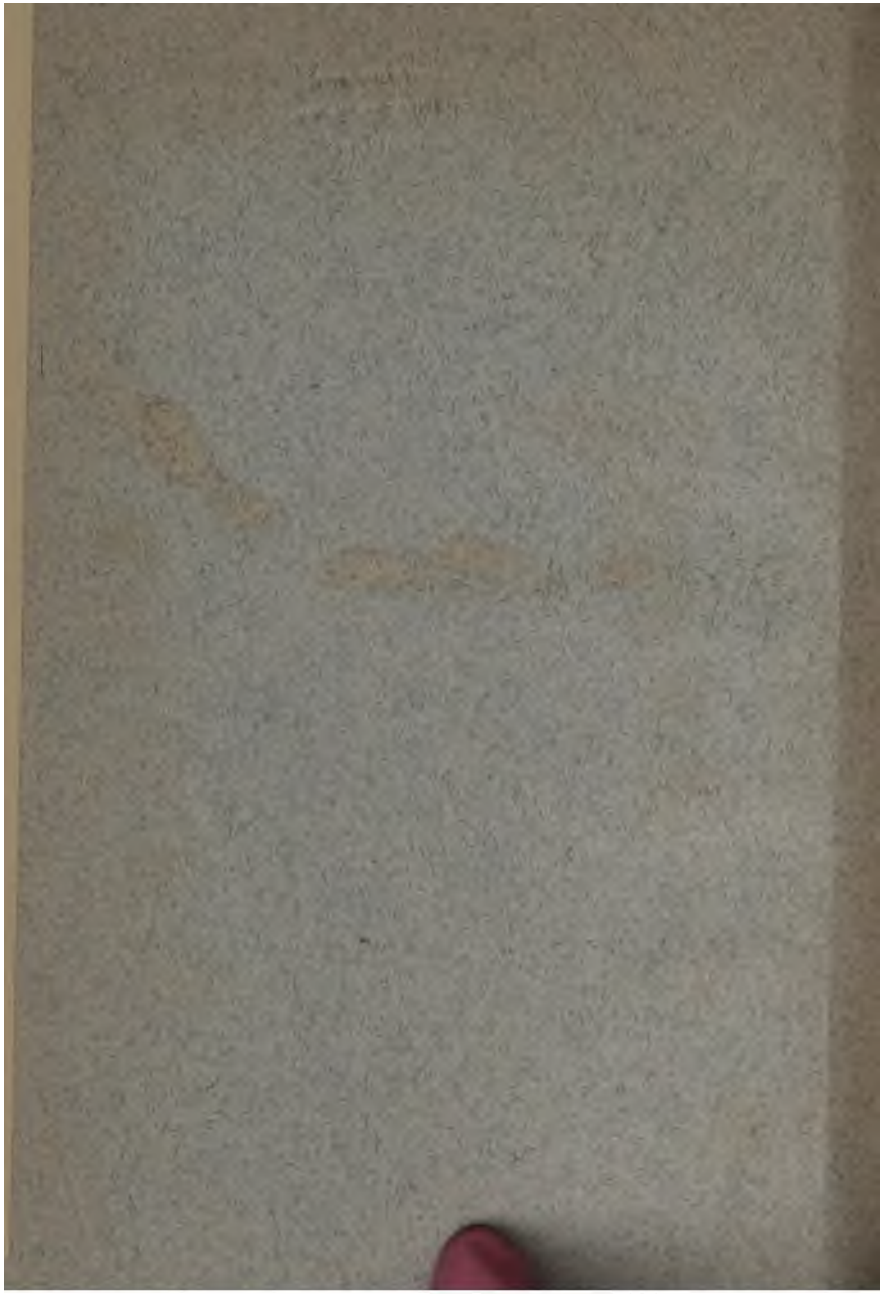
AN

APPEAL TO ALL CANADIANS

BY

A TORONTO BOY.

Toronto:
HUNTER, ROSE & Co., 25 WELLINGTON ST. WEST.
1880.



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BY

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TORONTO, 31st JANUARY, 1880.

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July 24, 1917

CANADA FIRST.

Let Eighteen-eighty, close Colonial life,
And Canada, a Nation now become!
We court no bitter feelings, war, or strife,
But we must have an Independent Home.

A colony, a Nation ne'er can be,
And proud ambition rises with our years.
Our aim is noble, 'tis this land to see
A Greater Britain, founded without tears.

'Tis calmly granted, that no grievance dire,
Exists to rouse our sons *now* to rebel;
No bondage here, to set men's souls on fire,
Nor have we tales of unjust rule to tell.

The older nations of the earth may ask,
"Why then, should Canada desire to change?
Why cut the British cords? Why cease to bask
In Britain's glorious sunshine? This seems strange."

Not stranger, than in stripling grown a man,
Thoughts, yearnings, rise, that urge him far to roam.
'Twas ever thus since first the world began;—
Strong natures seek an Independent Home.

All manly men should woo and win their wives,
Nor ask their mothers for their love to plead;
And often those from whom we've had our lives,
May not be trusted our hearts' wish to speed.

Thus, Canada a manly course would steer;
To treat *direct* with nations now would choose;
On equal footing meet them as their peer,
Nor henceforth, rights and claims by proxy lose.

Commercial wisdom wreathes our brows of youth,
There are great foemen worthy of our steel.
There's wealth to win; great wealth we need, in truth,
To build a nation, and maintain it's weal.

Then grand Great Britain! let this son go free,
To raise a new Republic to his name;
The faults and follies of Columbia, he
Will shun, and rise to strength, to wealth and fame.

Nor deem that Annexation is involved;
Our hearts on Independence, set are sure!
We love our home, as ours, and are resolved
On Independence,—Annexation's cure.

We cannot love the soil we never trod,
Yet kindly think of our forefathers' land;
But Canada's our own; each lake, brook, sod,
Hill, vale, falls, river, wood, and rocky strand.

Not ours the "banks and braes o' bonny Doon,"
Nor English, Irish, Scottish lakes and bens;
Old castles ivy-clad, of old bards' croon,
Nor lovely past'ral scenes, in plains and glens.

Those old-world land-marks, our dear fathers knew,
And loved them; whilst immortal poets tell
Their story to all ages; and we too,
Have felt, still feel, their impress and their spell.

The question must be asked,—"What is our age?"
"Is the Republic elder of the two?"

At least 'tis shown by History's true page,
That Canada, though young, is scarcely new.

Yet see the contrast, and let Britain say,
Is she quite blameless of our low estate;
On one side progress, wealth, and pow'rful sway;
On ours—well—on the theme we won't dilate.

But monarchy has blame, and British gold
Has flowed into our elder brother's hands:
What has our fealty earned, when all is told?
It leaves us child-like still, in swaddling bands.

Not to our lands have emigrants, in shoals,
Flocked from the British Isles to swell our ranks;
Of those we get some poor, infrequent doles;
The best pass through, and leave no cash nor thanks.

"For us," say they, "the land, where freedom bright,
Lifts up our manhood, long time crushed by pride
Of king, queen, prince, duke, lord and squire and knight;
Henceforth, where all are equal, we'll abide.

"We'll choose no British *colony* for home;
We will be *citizens*, free men among.
Now forced from Britain far away to roam,
We join the great Republic from her sprung!

"You have self-government, we do not doubt;
But cling to monarchy, in form and name.
Cut old-world cords, we yet may turn about,
And help you, a Republic new, to frame.

"You now have knights, Canadian born and bred,
Soon native lords may rise, in pride and power;
Next, for yourselves you'll choose a crowned head;—
Adieu to Independence from that hour!"

Misguided, these may be, but here we stand,
Progressing? Yes, but at a snail's slow pace.
Give up the reins! remove thy queenly hand!
Thy rule, Britannia, sinks us in disgrace!

And casting off thy rule, with thy consent,
We would in peace, with mutual blessings part.
Suggest no king—we'll choose a President—
As a Republic, we, our race would start.

For our inheritance we claim this land;
But for ourselves *alone*, we seek it not;
Send out your teeming numbers like the sand;
We've room for all—for each a hopeful lot.

II.

We would a picture of our country draw;
A sketch to spur our sons to deeds of worth;
We've slept; we've dreamed; awake O Canada!
Rouse thee to action; to thy second birth!

The broad Atlantic with its stormy roar,
Breaks at thy feet, and feeds thy stalwart sons;
And on its bosom, to and from thy shore,
Bears fleets of vessels—millions are their tons.

St. Lawrence River, sweeping, grand, sublime,
Pours down its waters to the ocean vast:
A thousand isles its birth-place dot; no clime
In trav'ler's mem'ry, has the scene surpassed.

The tributary Ottawa, swift, bold,
Stretching through forests dense, to reach its goal,
Might cast in shade historic rivers old,—
Each famous made, by some heroic rôle.

And next the Great Lakes claim our mede of praise;
Like oceans in their storms, their depth, their size.
Before the Revolutionary days,
These all were Britain's own;—she's lost the prize.

Now Canada can only claim a share;
The huge Republic borders on their shores:
Has swallowed Michigan; and everywhere
Has built large cities, filled with wealth's rich stores.

But still our share in those, must patriots please,
Superior, and Huron—noble, grand;
Erie, Ontario—all inland seas—
Wild, fierce, in storm; in calm, serene and bland.

The lakes with fish abound; the bord'ring land
Has fertile soils. The forests swarm with game.
Where rough, rich minerals, and pine trees stand,
Our hardy sons of toil, their wealth to claim.

Yet, sad to tell, our iron and copper mines—
Mines, rich in all the ores the nations use—
Lie almost undeveloped, whilst the signs
Of cramped attempts, our rivals smart, amuse.

How beautiful upon the Upper Lakes,
The scenes so few Canadians know well;
Majestic mountains, rocks, where echo wakes
To answer ev'ry shout, clear as a bell.

And lovely islands, fit for homes, or sport,
Profusely wooded, rock-bound, pierced with bays;
Whilst fertile belts on mainland, settlers court,
Square miles in thousands, of the land that *pays*.

Now, bounding through the forest, springs the deer;
The duck, on rice-beds fattening in flocks;

Whilst near the game, the farmer drives his steer,
Or during harvest, teams his ripe wheat shocks.

So onwards may the trav'lers on their course,
Pass boundless forests, prairies rolling, vast,
And settlers only wanted; with *iron-horse*,
To carry their produce to market, fast.

The Rocky Mountains passed,—those peaks so grand,
Where large game lurk, and lure the hunter, bold!
British Columbia, rocky, healthful land,
Spreads out, and welcomes all to glean its gold.

Here lies the head of Canada's long frame,
Washed by Pacific Ocean, warm and mild—
Vancouver's Island, seat of ev'ry aim
That makes for progress, in a country wild:

Queen Charlotte Islands, Gems of Southern Seas!
Here shall a Nation's Park in time be found;
For balmy airs (the North Pacific breeze)
Give warmth Virginian, and spread health around.

Still here, as elsewhere on our wide-spread soil,
The Indian, tamed, and treated as a child,
Is kindly weaned from Paganism and broil,—
To Christianity is slowly wiled.

But space too great, is needed here to scan
The districts left behind, not yet portrayed:
Algoma, Parry Sound, Saskatchewan,
Muskoka, Manitoba—all high grade.

Our picture's apt to drift into detail;
Our ev'ry map with poetry is rich:
We cull a few bright gems, that cannot fail,
Adults to rouse, and growing youths bewitch.

All up "The Northern" on a summer's day,
The artist may bright scenes in landscape take;
The busy Crescent on Kempenfeldt Bay,
Barrie and Consort, pride of Simcoe Lake.

Then fair Orillia, near Couchiching calm,
With many beauties rare of copse and creek,
Enchant the eye, the senses steep in balm,
The mind enrich, and joy to all bespeak.

The tourists, happy, leaving care behind,
To further lakes their journey may extend;
By steamer (past stern highlands) steered, to find
Their health renewed, where strength and beauty blend.

Muskoka lake and river; dark Rosseau;
And Joseph, picturesque—are *all* sublime,
With birch-clad isles, green vales where trout-brooks flow;
Hills, rocky, rugged, pine-clad, hard to climb:

And lakelets, islets, now unknown, obscure,
Beyond the beaten track repose, to wake
A second Scott, our tourists to allure
With a Canadian "Lady of the Lake."

In these, in gifted Canada's wide range,
Resources endless rest—scarce known as yet,
And we a Colony! Shall we not change?
Or changing, shall we for Court baubles fret?

No representatives have we to urge
Our claims at foreign courts, as traders keen:
Nay, ev'n at world's fairs, held this earth to purge
Of war's grim tastes: we snubbed, ignored, have been,

Yet there are manufactures, useful, good,
We dare to face the world with, and defy

All rivals to surpass them; and we could,
If Independent, all the world supply.

Shut out from better markets, our sons' skill
Is held within cramped bounds, no outlet finds.
We want not all our men, the soil to till;
And forests soon are cleared by lusty hinds.

III.

We've not been idle! we have cities reared!
The Crystal Palace stands on wigwam's site;
The Red Man, muskallongé oft has speared—
Still salmon spears, where many sails flash white.

The steamboats ply on lake and river now,
Where erst was only seen the frail canoe;
Whilst railways traverse, where with arrowed bow,
The Indian chased and killed the cariboo.

Our seat of Government, fair Ottawa,
The stumps of forest trees, shows, undecayed;
The men yet live on Speed's green banks, who saw
The first tree felled, where Guelph's wide streets are laid.

Nay ev'n in Manitoba's late lone land,
The city Winnipeg has raised its walls;
And court, church, college, school, and mart now stand
Where half-breeds held for years their boist'rous brawls.

For monarchy, monopolists had placed
In rule, o'er wide expanse of plain and hill;
Through forests, rivers, prairies, hunters chased;
The wild-eyed buffalo in herds to kill.

When once Confederation, (Union blest!)
Had planned "Dominion" as our new-found name,

This land, Keewatin, and the great North-West,
Were bought—now o'er the earth is heard their fame:

And justly famed! by their own work supplied,
Ten million families may flourish there,
And multiply by lake and river side,
On fertile prairies, rich beyond compare!

Our older cities British hist'ry notes,—
Quebec,—whose heights oft witnessed bloody fray,—
St. John, New Brunswick, picturesque, where floats
A fleet, each summer's day, on Fundy Bay:

And Halifax, of Scotia New, the strength;
Chief port of outlet for a Continent:
Here ends at last our railway system's length,—
The locomotives seem to pant, quite spent.

To ocean, yielding up the freight they bring,
From where "the course of empire takes its way,"
All kinds of produce by our ships take wing,
Consigned to ports where commerce holds its sway.

Soon from th' Atlantic sea-board we shall see
The great road built, our continent to span.
To our Pacific sea-board,—this shall be
A short high-way to China and Japan.

Quebec's been named, but not as ocean port,
Nor as the first our immigrants to greet;
Canadian timber, lumber, ev'ry sort,
There gathers—shipped is—by the million feet.

Ship building there with energy goes on;
There ocean vessels, steam and sail, are seen;
The ancient citadel looks down upon
A beauteous, busy, and enliv'ning scene.

When pressed by cares, or in despondent mood,
Go scale those heights! romantic thoughts will rise,
Not annexation dreams—Canadian could
Ne'er wish to see *Quebec* a Yankee prize!

Commercial Capital, gay Montreal!
Lapped in the great twinned rivers' ample isle,
With back-ground regal, wood-clad Mont Royal,
On thee may fortune fair, forever smile.

Here terminates the ocean steamer's trip:
His voyage o'er, the traveller now sees
Continuous lines in solid workmanship,
Of cut-stone terrace walls, locks, wharves, and quays.

The French, as British subjects, have proved true,
Have joined, yea often led in prized reform;
They are Canadian, patriotic too,
And Canada love first, in calm or storm.

Old Kingston, proud in forts, in martial lore,
Still trains ambitious youth to use of arms,
But casts no cannon, *thirsts* for war no more,
And turns out implements of peace,—for farms.

Here locomotives, ships, and railway cars,
Pianos, all are made where bag-pipes skirled
In days of yore, when kilted sons of Mars,
Marched to their pibrochs, or in Scotch reel whirled.

Ontario's num'rous towns of goodly fame,
Whose denizens with earth's best gifts are blest,
We must pass by, to reach thy greater name,
Toronto, fair Queen City of the West!

Who would Toronto New describe aright,
Must well have known the little York of old;

The city, grand by day, and eke by night,
Has greater merit when its growth is told.

It's early hist'ry's written; scan it well,
And then drive through its streets, its parks, its squares;
Study its architecture, and foretell
Its future certain bounds—he's bold who dares!

When skies are clear, and Boulevards all green,
Mount, to the top, St. James' Cathedral spire,
In distance, see Ontario's waters sheen,—
The whole's a view the poet to inspire.

Toronto Bay, with floating craft alive,
Steamer and yacht, schooner and boat and barge:
The island, bare and lonely, seems to strive
To hold its own against the waters' charge.

To east, to north, and further still to west,
The city, wide spread out to gazer's eye,
Reveals straight avenues, their margins dressed
With living trees—chestnuts with maples vie.

Line upon line, the buildings far extend;
Tall spire and turret, dome with silv'ry glance;
Of college, church, and depôt, rise and lend
Conspicuous points, the picture to enhance.

Nor may the fact'ries chimney-shafts be missed,
Nor blended rails that thread the Esplanade;
Grain elevators—but we here desist,—
All can't be grasped, much must be left in shade.

Herculean tasks, Toronto press upon;
Wise energy may wipe out ev'ry blot;
We hope to see the banks of sluggish Don
Made classic ground; the isle, a lovely spot.

The sewage all drawn off to barren land;
The marsh filled up, and iron-works there a-blaze;
The water pure, and Aldermen command
Well earned respect, due honour, and all praise.

We now must mention Hamilton, and speak
Of enterprise unceasing; for her sons,
Ambition noble spurs, and nothing weak
Has marred the record of the course she runs.

'Gainst odds contending, in Commercial race,
We've seen built up, on Burlington's safe Bay,
A city handsome, whose fair daughters grace
Quiet homes of busy men, more grave than gay.

A stirring Port! Its Railways far extend
Their arms to serve the trade that centres here;
Its manufact'ries thrive, and outward send
Productions of their skill, to far and near.

The mountain ridge that crowns its villa'd slope,
Stretching to where the Mighty Falls do roar,
A splendid view affords, suggesting hope,
That Hamilton may flourish ever-more.

Niagara! the portrait of thy shrine
Is known to pilgrims from the whole wide world;
Thou mostly art our own, but we decline
To paint thy weighty flood, o'er high rocks hurled!

Nor can we dwell on Brantford's points of note!
Scenes to recall of boyhood's chequered days;
When swift Grand River bore our darting boat
To groves where now the Bow Park cattle graze.

But, passing glance at London we must give—
In Middlesex? we truly answer, yes.

On Thames? It is, but there no Cockneys live;
We speak of *London small*, London the Less.

Go change thy name; no longer ape the Great!
Change all those names, or dread the vain bird's doom.
We must in kindness thy false pride berate,—
Jack-daw, absurdly tailed in peacock's plume!

Repair the blunders of thy founders, then;
They erred in head, not heart; condemn them not.
Our German brothers—enterprising men,
As thine are—must wipe out a sim'lar blot.

When this is done, let native bards begin
To sing the praise of each by its new name;—
Vienna, Paris, Baden and Berlin,
With London, shall receive deserved fame.

Here ends the sketch of Canada our Home!
The weak attempt presumptuous may seem;
The field is boundless—vast—a bulky tome
Could written be, nor half exhaust the theme.

IV.

The Poets of this Nation must appear!
We want our ballads—none are written yet!
Canadian lilts and songs, the youthful ear
Ne'er hears when nurse or mother soothes her pet.

Here find the basis for a Nation's life,
'Tis love of home, love for "my ain fireside;"
It clasps in warm embrace the husband, wife,
The children, and all relatives beside.

This is the basis; but it must expand
From Nature's love instinctive—love of home,—

To love of country, love of native land,—
Still selfish, but more noble theme for poem.

Canada first! the feeble cry we hear;
Despise it not, the next shall be a shout!
A new-born nation shall at once appear;
Though feeble, its importance never doubt.

'Tis selfish (but 'tis natural and just);
Whose national sentiment is not? we ask.
Till all the nations can each other trust,
We must be selfish in our country's task.

Canada first! first, Canada we love!
Next, glorious Britain, our most noble sire;
Next, our near neighbour: let us brothers prove,
And all the nations where free men respire.

No man is named in this our rambling screed;
Colonial heroes we will not forget,
But heroes, National, are now our need;—
Rise, sun, Republican! Colonial, set!

Ontario's metropolis, prepare!
From Montreal, e'en now, is heard the cry,—
"Thy spirit, independence! let me share,
Lord of the lion-heart and eagle eye."

Young Canada a crisis has to meet;
Trust not his fate to weaklings or to knaves;
No factionists, corrupt, shall guide his feet;
Canadians true must lead, no party slaves.

Mechanics, and all Sciences and Arts,
Are fostered here, in colleges are taught,
Throughout the land: with youth of noble parts,
Toronto's University is fraught.

Our schools, on system unsurpassed, increase,
And thou Toronto! hast been aptly named,
Our "Educational Metropolis;"
In early days (as now) thy schools were famed.

What, now, canst thou devote to Canada?
Give scholars, judges, gifted men of sense,
Of science; and give statesmen, learn'd in law;
But patriotic all, without pretence.

Such must the *leaders* of the Nation be—
To shape, to guide, the Independent State;
But first a *manhood suffrage* we must see,
'Twill come, 'tis due, why for it longer wait?

Young men of Canada, demand this right!
Th' existing parties rule by turns! New life
Can ne'er spring up, till in your youth and might,
You crush both down, and end their aimless strife.

Why does your country educate her youth?
To fit them for her service, when they're men,
When are they men? At twenty-one, in truth;
Or never—even at three score and ten.

In Legislation have a voice, a vote;
Of legislators, you should be the peers;
You slaves are, else; in peace, in war—*this note*—
Though forth to war you go as volunteers.

In British legislation, we've no voice;
Our fisheries are sold, nay, giv'n away;
The Yankee 'cute can o'er the gift rejoice,
Whilst we, for Fenian raids, receive no pay.

We have no voice in wars that Britain makes;
Why should we be in danger when these rage?

We would an *ally* be, if Britain shakes:
But freemen we must be in this free age.

Men of Toronto! scattered through the land,
Or settled still within the city's lines,
Your culture show; come forth, and take your stand
For Independence! till it rules and shines.

And now, with earnest, hopeful, warm appeal,
To *all* Canadians, who their country prize,
We close this effort for Canadian weal;
Unite! Combine! The Nation organize!

Native and foreign-born, combine! unite!
A patriotic stand shall win our claim;
Roll up your numbers for the National fight;
Let "The Dominion" justify its name!

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